



William Donald Schaefer
Governor

Jacqueline H. Rogers
Secretary, DHCD

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCE
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property Name: Walter Johnson House Survey Number: BA - 1017
Property Address: 406 Fairmount Avenue, Towson, MD
Project: CDBG Rehabilitation Agency: Baltimore County

Site visit by MHT Staff: ☒ no ☐ yes Name _____ Date _____

District Name: East Towson Historic District Survey Number: _____

____ Listed ☒ Eligible Nomination prepared + approved by GCC 10/21/71 Comment
but never submitted to NR?
Criteria: ☒ A ☒ B ☒ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None

The resource ☒ contributes/____ does not contribute to the historic significance of this
historic district in:
☒ Location ☒ Design ☒ Setting ☐ Materials
☐ Workmanship ☐ Feeling ☒ Association

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)
The East Towson Historic District was developed from the mid 19th century through the early 20th century by blacks around property acquired by free blacks manumitted by Captain Ridgely. It embodies the architectural and society of a community developed for and by blacks. Many of the houses were built by builders from the community. They are vernacular interpretations of popular styles and are sited on large lots.
The two-story frame house at 406 Fairmount Avenue was constructed c. 1915 in the last burst of growth in the community. The house was built by Willie Johnson for Walter Johnson. Willie + Ben Johnson built many houses in the community around the turn-of-the-century. The Johnson family was significant in the early settlement and development of the community. Though altered, 406 Fairmount still conveys the local builder's interpretation of the stylistic Documentation on the property is presented in: eccentricities of the Queen Anne style.

M.I. Form # BA 1017 and vertical file on E. Towson

Prepared by: Marcus Pollock / Merry Stinson

Elizabeth Hannold Date: 4/24/91
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

NR program concurrence: ☐ yes ☐ no ☒ not applicable

____ Date _____
Reviewer, NR program Jmg

Survey No. BA 10117

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

I. Geographic Region:

- ☐ Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)
☐ Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles,
Prince George's and St. Mary's)
☒ Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll,
Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)
☐ Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- ☐ Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.
☐ Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.
☐ Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.
☐ Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.
☐ Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.
☐ Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900
☐ Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600
☐ Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750
☐ Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815
☐ Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870
☒ Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930
☐ Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present
☐ Unknown Period (☐ prehistoric ☐ historic)

III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- ☐ Subsistence
☐ Settlement

☐ Political
☐ Demographic
☐ Religion
☐ Technology
☐ Environmental Adaption

IV. Historic Period Themes:

- ☐ Agriculture
☒ Architecture, Landscape Architecture,
and Community Planning
☐ Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
☐ Government/Law
☐ Military
☐ Religion
☒ Social/Educational/Cultural
☐ Transportation

V. Resource Type:

Category: Building
Historic Environment: Town
Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Domestic - Single dwelling

Known Design Source: WVIA Willie Johnson

CAPSULE SUMMARY

BA-1017

406 ~~404~~ Fairmont Avenue
East Towson, Baltimore County
1895
Private

The single family dwelling at 406 Fairmont Avenue was constructed between 1900 and 1915 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. The history of East Towson dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendents of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendents of the first African-American residents.

This Queen Anne-style dwelling, built circa 1895, is sited near Fairmount Avenue on a level grassy lot amongst mature trees and shrubs. The two-story, three-bay dwelling has a solid stone foundation supporting a wood-frame structural system clad with a combination of vinyl siding, asphalt shingles, and simulated brick. The entry features a Craftsman-style one-leaf wood door with multiple lights and panels and is flanked by wood double-hung sash 2/2-light windows. These windows are repeated in the second story. The one-story, three-bay screened-in front porch features wood turned posts supporting a half-hipped roof. The house has an aluminum box cornice and a cross-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The front gable has a recessed lancet arch opening cut into it. A wood balustrade on top of the porch roof encloses the opening, creating a small balcony.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-1017

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic 406 Fairmont Avenue
other

2. Location

street and number 406 Fairmont Avenue not for publication
city, town Towson vicinity
county Baltimore County

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Walter A. & Regina M. Johnson
street and number 406 Fairmont Avenue telephone Not Available
city, town Baltimore state MD zip code 21286-5420

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse tax map and parcel: 70A, 457
city, town Towson liber 5145 folio 581

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report
☐ Other

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	1 0
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> defense	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> education	structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	
			Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory
			1

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-1017

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This Queen Anne-style dwelling, built circa 1895, is sited near Fairmount Avenue on a level grassy lot amongst mature trees and shrubs. The two-story, three-bay dwelling has a solid stone foundation supporting a wood-frame structural system clad with a combination of vinyl siding, asphalt shingles, and simulated brick. The entry features a Craftsman-style one-leaf wood door with multiple lights and panels and is flanked by wood double-hung sash 2/2-light windows. These windows are repeated in the second story. The one-story, three-bay screened-in front porch features wood turned posts supporting a half-hipped roof. The house has an aluminum box cornice and a cross-gable roof covered with asphalt shingles. The front gable has a recessed lancet arch opening cut into it. A wood balustrade on top of the porch roof encloses the opening, creating a small balcony.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-1017

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history	
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime industry	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Specific dates 1895 ca.

Architect/Builder Unknown

Construction dates 1895 ca.

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance reports, complete evaluation on a DOE Form - see manual.)

The house at 406 Fairmount Avenue was constructed circa 1895 in the East Towson neighborhood of Baltimore County. East Towson is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, specifically the pre-Civil War development of an African-American neighborhood in a predominately white community. The history of this property dates from the purchase of one-and-a-quarter acres of land by Daniel Harris in September 1853. This is believed to be the first documented African-American landholding in Towson, and is among the oldest such ethnic enclave in Baltimore County. Further, manumitted slaves and/or descendants of former slaves, many of who were owned by Charles Ridgely, populated the neighborhood. Hampered by the low economic status of the residents, development in the 19th century was slow, increasing after the turn of the 20th century. The setting of the property, building styles, and construction materials were guided by the limited economic status of the residents and their desire to establish a neighborhood of their own without the assistance of white architects, builders, and craftsmen. By 1927, the community was ninety-five percent improved with single-family dwellings, social buildings, a school, and religious structures. Many of the current homeowners and tenants living in the neighborhood are descendants of the first African-American residents.

East Towson as a whole is representative of an important phase of architectural development in Baltimore County, illustrating the dilution of popular architectural styles to more efficiently meet the needs of the neighborhood, and the builders' untrained abilities to execute the fashionable ornamentation. Thus, East Towson provided lower cost housing in a more suburban neighborhood, rather than the urban setting their economic status typically perpetuated.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-1017

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 0.172 acres

Acreage of historical setting 0.172 acres

Quadrangle name Towson

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The dwelling is located at 406 Fairmount Avenue in the vicinity of Towson in the Ninth District of Baltimore County. It has historically been associated with tax map 70A, parcel 457 since its construction.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title K. Baynard & J. Riggle, Architectural Historians

organization E.H.T. Traceries

date 10/9/01

street and number 1121 5th Street NW

telephone 202/393-1199

city or town Washington

state DC zip code 20001

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032
410-514-7600

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-1017

Name 406 Fairmont Avenue

Continuation Sheet

Number 9 Page 1

Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

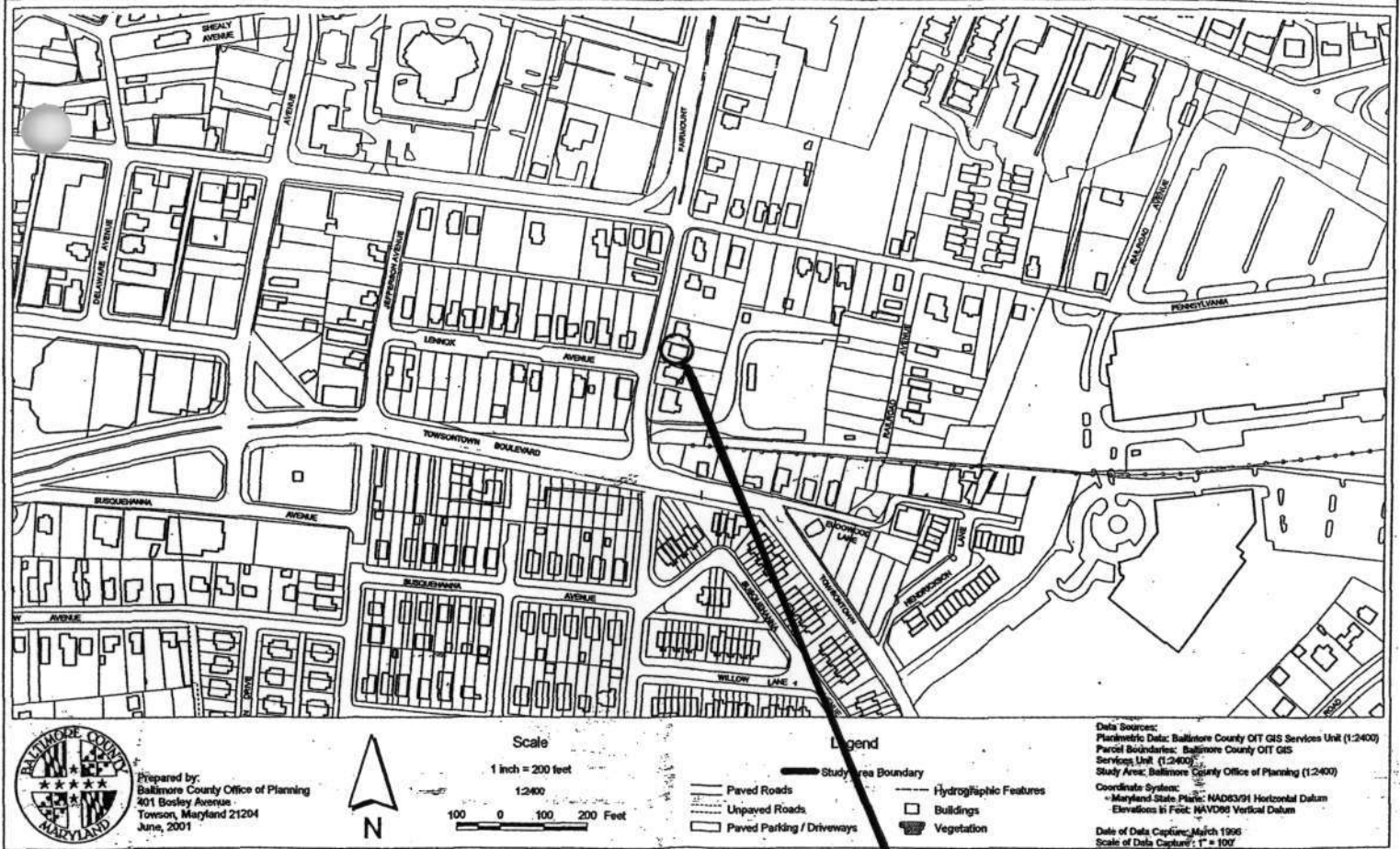
Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. A History of Baltimore County. Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Scharf, J. Thomas. History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men. Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys. Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850

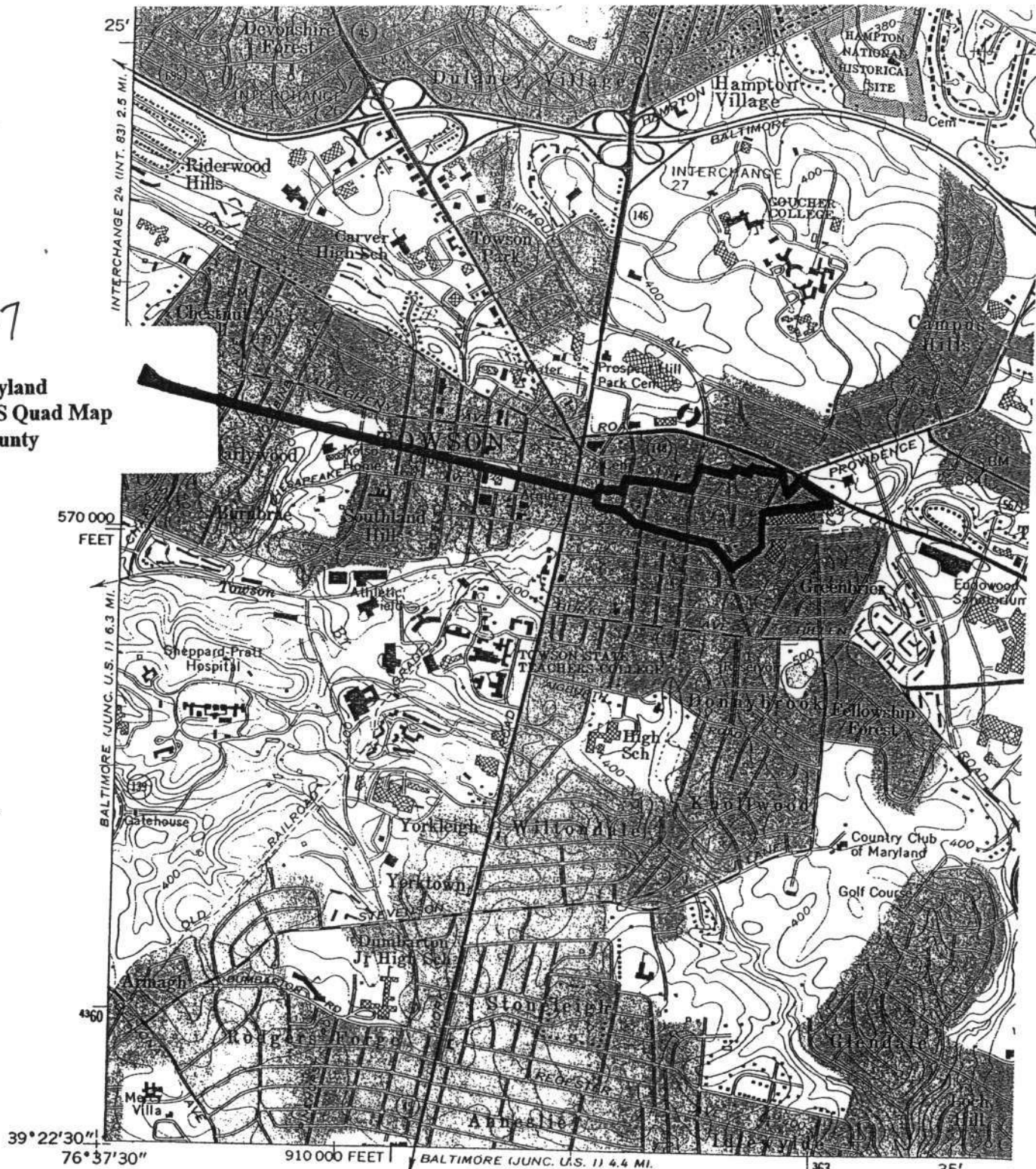
East Towson: Planimetric Data



BA#: 1017
406 Fairmont Avenue
East Towson, Baltimore County
Towson, MD USGS Map

BA-1017

East Towson
Towson, Maryland
Towson USGS Quad Map
Baltimore County



(BALTIMORE WEST)
5662' 5W

Mapped by the Army Map Service
Edited and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Maryland
Bureau of Control Surveys and Maps

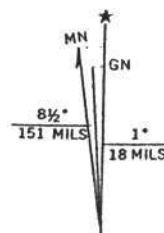
Culture and drainage in part compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1943. Topography by planetable surveys 1944
Culture revised by the Geological Survey 1957

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Maryland coordinate system
1000-metre Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only
landmark buildings are shown

Revisions shown in purple compiled by the Geological Survey from
aerial photographs taken 1966 and 1974. This information not
field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1974 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



BA-107

406 FAIRMONT AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/01

MD SHPO

WEST CORNER

1 OF 2



BA - 1017

406 FAIRMONT AVENUE

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

10/01

MD SHPO

NORTH CORNER

2 OF 2

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

THE WALTER JOHNSON HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

406 Fairmount Ave.

second

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md.

VICINITY OF Baltimore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☐ BUILDING(S)
☒ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☒ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Walter A. Johnson

Telephone #: 296-2607

STREET & NUMBER

406 Fairmount Ave

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore County Courthouse

Liber #:

Folio #: 5145:581

STREET & NUMBER

401 Bosley Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Towson Md. 21204

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

BA-1017 - 406 Fairmount

c. 1905 - 1915

D/

DI

SI

CI

The basic structure of this two-story frame house, a two bay deep by three bay wide frame building, is crossed on the street facade by a gable extending from the main roof to the eaves of a one story-porch. This cross-gable extends slightly from the house to enclose a small balcony.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

 DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

406 Fairmount

This house shows a local builder's interpretation of some of the stylish eccentricities of the Queen Anne style. The main house is actually a 2-story rectangle with a gable roof running north-south. A perpendicular gable protrudes from this block, running from the peak to the floor level of the second story. In the center, a small porch is partly inset under a pointed arch, and partly protrudes over the hipped first floor roof. Its forward edge is balustraded while its sides are boxed. French doors set with diamond shaped panes of glass lead onto the porch from the second floor. The first-story porch is semi-enclosed below turned posts.

The north and south sides of the house are each lit by one 2/2 window on the first floor, and two on the second floor. A two-story shed-roofed addition covers the east side of the house. The two rooms in this section are followed by a porch on the southeast.

A central door on the main facade has one window to either side. It enters the main room, which has a stair turning in the southeast corner. This stair has a large turned newel post and turned balusters. The northeast corner of this room features a fireplace whose mantel is supported by finely styled brackets. A smaller room is to the north. Circles corner blocks embellish the flat board architraves.

This house rests on a stone foundation and is covered with brown asphalt imitating brick.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

BA-1017

PERIOD

☐ PREHISTORIC
☐ 1400-1499
☐ 1500-1599
☐ 1600-1699
☐ 1700-1799
☐ 1800-1899
☐ 1900-

☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC
☐ AGRICULTURE
☐ ARCHITECTURE
☐ ART
☐ COMMERCE
☐ COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING
☐ CONSERVATION
☐ ECONOMICS
☐ EDUCATION
☐ ENGINEERING
☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
☐ INDUSTRY
☐ INVENTION

☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
☐ LAW
☐ LITERATURE
☐ MILITARY
☐ MUSIC
☐ PHILOSOPHY
☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

☐ RELIGION
☐ SCIENCE
☐ SCULPTURE
☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
☐ THEATER
☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Walter Johnson house, built around 1915, is one of many houses built by the Johnson's (Willie & Ben Johnson) around the turn of the century. The Johnson's, who were among the original settlers of E. Towson, played a significant role in the development of some of the social institutions in E. Towson - particularly the Relief Association, the Odd Fellows and the Knights of Columbus.

The Walter Johnson house, built around 1915, is another example of the influence of the Johnson family in E. Towson. This house, built by Willie Johnson, is one of many located in the E. Towson community.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marcus Pollock/coordinator Merry Stinson/architect 7/77

ORGANIZATION

Committee to Save E. Towson. Towson Ymca

DATE

823-8870

STREET & NUMBER

600 W. Chesapeake Ave.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

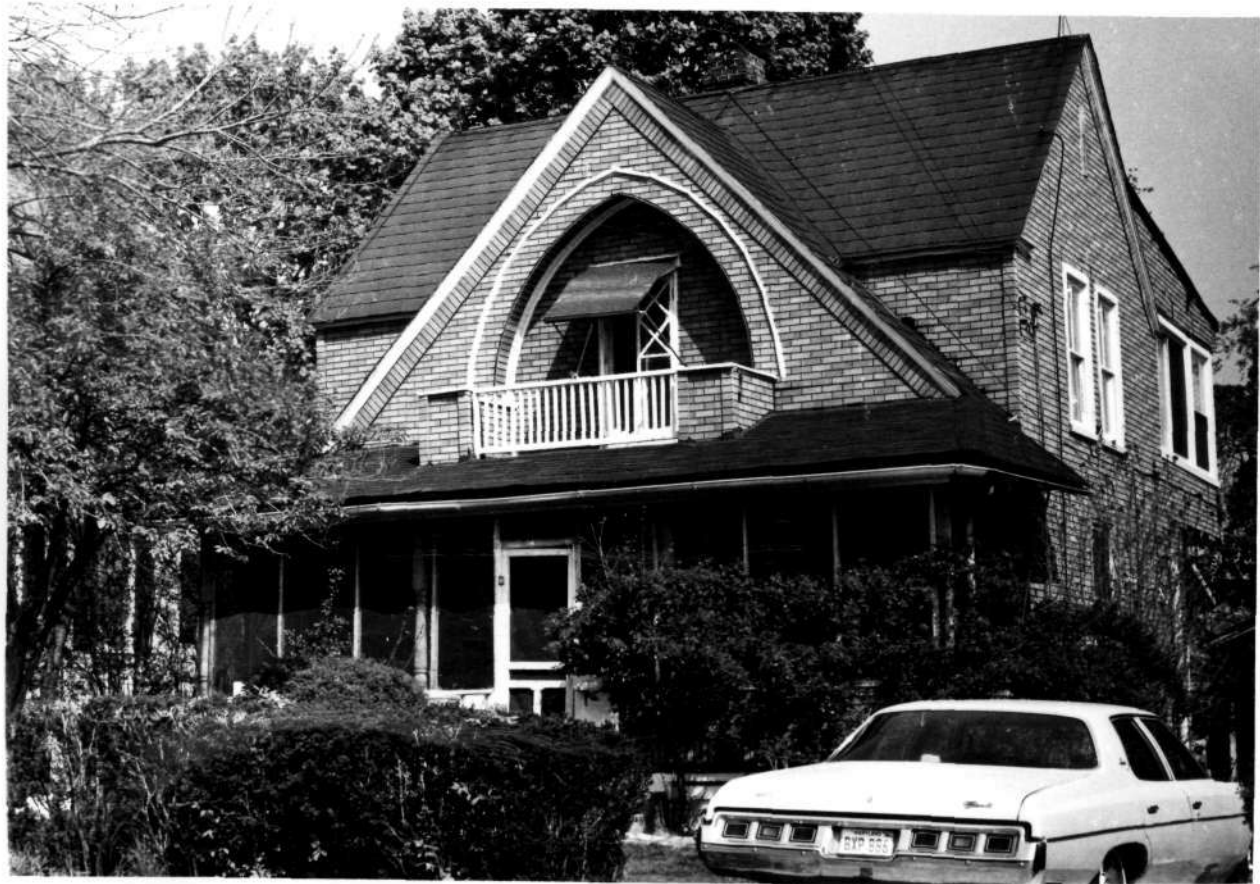
Towson Md. 21204

STATE

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RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



BA-1017
Johnson House
406 Fairmount Ave.
Towson, Md.
west

Merry Stinson
1977